

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O P 011703Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9320
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 1896

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU, CY
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CARAMANLIS

1. SUMMARY. IN PRIMATE MEETING TODAY WITH CARAMANLIS HE EXPRESSED ONCE AGAIN HIS GREAT SATISFACTION WITH CLIFFORD MISSION AND WARM PERSONAL REGARD FOR CLIFFORD. HE ASKED WHETHER I HAD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION TO CONVEY CONCERNING CLIFFORD'S STOPS IN ANKARA AND NICOSIA AND I SAID THAT I DID NOT. HE RE- STATED MAIN POINTS OF HIS FEBRUARY 18 PRESENTATION TO CLIFFORD CONCERNING GREEK-TURKISH AND CYPRUS PROBLEMS AND ASKED THAT I EMPHASIZE DURING MY FORTHCOMING CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON THE THREAT OF GREEK-TURKISH WAR IF TURKISH PROVOCATIONS AND EXPANSIONISM CONTINUE. HE RESPONDED TO MY CHALLENGING HIS REFERENCES TO TURKISH "PROVOCATIONS" AND "EXPANSIONISM". HE SAID "A GOOD CLIMATE" NOW EXISTS IN THE AREA FOR REVISED APPROACH AND NEW INITIATIVES FROM THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. HE CONVEYED BEST WISHES AND REGARDS TO PRESIDENT CARTER, SECRETARY VANCE, AND CLARK CLIFFORD AND SAID HE WANTED TO BE AS COOPERATIVE AS HE COULD WITH WASHINGTON.

END SUMMARY.

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2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH A STANDING ARRANGEMENT I HAVE WITH PRIME MINISTER CARMANLIS I LET HIS OFICE KNOW YESTERDAY THAT I EXPECTED TO RETURN TO THE U.S. LATER THIS WEEK FOR CONSULTATION AND TO ATTEND TO SOME PERSONAL MATTERS. HE ASKED TO SEE ME PRIVATELY TODAY AND I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM THAT MEETING.

3. AT THE OUTSET CARAMANLISSTATED ONCE AGAIN HIS GREAT APPRE-

CIATION FOR THE VISIT OF CLARK CLIFFORD WHICH HE THOUGHT WAS MOST WORTHWHILE. HE HAD AN EXCELLENT IMPRESSION OF CLIFFORD PERSONALLY AND HAD DEVELOPED A WARM PERSONAL REGARD FOR HIM. CARAMANLIS ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR CLIFFORD'S PERSONAL MESSAGE TO HIM (LONDON 3326). HE ASKED IF I HAD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION TO CONVEY TO HIM CONCERNING CLIFFORD'S VISITS IN ANKARA AND NICOSIA AND I SAID THAT I DID NOT. HE INQUIRED WHETHER DURING MY FORTHCOMING CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON I EXPECTED TO SEE PRESIDENT CARTER AND I SAID THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE PRSIDENT YET HAD THE TIME TO RECEIVE AMERICAN AMBASSADORS RETURNING TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATION BUT THAT I DID EXPECT TO SEE OTHER TOP USG OFFICIALS AND ALSO CLIFFORD. CARAMANLIS HAD APPARENTLY BEEN HAVING SOME SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT HIS PRESENTATION TO CLIFFORD AND ASKED ME TO CONVEY TO HIM AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS THAT HE (CARAMANLIS) HAD NO INTENTION OF TRYING TO TELL THE USG WHAT ITS POLICY SHOULD BE. HOWEVER, HE DID TINK IT HIS RIGHT AND DUTY TO EXPRESS HIS OWN VIEWS ON PROBLEMS IN THE AREA WITH UTTER FRANKNESS SO THAT OUR NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON COULD FORMULATE ITS LINES OF POLICY SO AS TO LEAD TO TRUE SETTLEMENTS, AVOIDING MISTAKES MADE IN THE PAST. AN INITIAL WRONG SET OF CONCEPTS, HE SAID, WOULD LEAD INEVITABLY TO ERRORS AND SETBACKS-- AND THIS HAD BEEN THE CASE WITH THE PREVIOUS AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION, AS HE UNDERSTOOD FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD EVEN ACKNOWLEDGED IN AN INTERVIEW SEVERAL DAYS AGO.

4. CARAMANLIS WENT ON TO REPEAT THE HIGH POINTS OF HIS FEBRUARY 18 PRESENTATION TO CLIFFORD. OBSERVING PRESS REPORTING THIS PAST WEEK FROM ANKARA AND NICOSIA HE SENSED A STRESS FROM TURKEY ON THE U.S.-TURKISH SECURITY RELATIONS AND LATER IN THE WEEK
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THE PARAMOUNTCY OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. CARAMANLIS SAID HE RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE QUESTIONS--AND ESPECIALLY THE DRAMA AND TRAGEDY OF CYPRUS--BUT HE URGED THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION NOT FAIL TO SEE THAT THE MORE SERIOUS AND DANGEROUS PROBLEM WAS THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY IN THE AEGEAN. HE REPEATED THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY NEW "PROVOCATION" FROM TURKEY.

5. HE MADE AGAIN EMPHATICALLY THE POINT THAT TURKEY HAD BECOME EXPANSIONIST. ALL THE DISPUTES, HE SAID, HAD BEEN CREATED BY THE TURKS. GREECE WOULD BE PERFECTLY HAPPY WITH PRESERVING THE STATUS QUO BUT TURKEY HAS REAISED CLAIMS AT THE EXPENSE OF GREECE. GREECE HAD AGREED TO DISCUSS THESE CLAIMS AND HAD EVEN MADE PROPOSALS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES, BUT THESE HAD BEEN TURNED ASIDE BY TURKEY IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. TURKEY HAD TO BE PERSUADED TO TURN AWAY FROM ITS EXPANSIONIST POSTURE OR CONFLICT WOULD BE INEVITABLE. GIVEN THE INTERESTS OF THE U.S. IN THIS AREA AND THE GREAT POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE U.S. HE WAS ASKING THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON ACCEPT

ITS RESPONSIBILITY AND PLAY ITS PROPER ROLE. HE WAS NOT ASKING THE USG TO ADOPT AND SUPPORT GREECE IN ANY WAY ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROBLEMS, BUT ONLY TO PLAY AN ACTIVE AND PERSUASIVE ROLE WITH TURKEY SO AS TO ENSURE THE AVOIDANCE OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THIS WAS THE ESSENCE OF WHAT HE TRIED TO CONVEY TO CLIFFORD AND OF THE MESSAGE HE WANTED ME ALSO TO CARRY BACK TO WASHINGTON.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 1896

EXDIS

6. I TOLD CARAMANLIS THAT HIS GENERAL VIEWS WERE ALREADY WELL KNOWN IN WASHINGTON AND THAT I WAS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT CLIFFORD'S REPORT WOULD MAKE THEM FULLY AND DIRECTLY KNOWN TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIGHEST USG OFFICIALS. I SAID I WOULD LIKE TO ASK HIM TWO QUESTIONS. THE FIRST CONCERNED SO-CALLED TURKISH "PROVOCATIONS". I TOLD HIM THAT AS HE KNEW THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AND EVEN CONTROVERSY CONCERNING MATTERS AFFECTING INTERNATIONAL WATERS, THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, AND THE SEABED. THE U.S. ITSELF HAD ITS SHARE OF DISAGREEMENTS WITH CANADA AND MEXICO -- AND, FOR THAT MATTER, WITH ECUADOR, PERU, CHILE AND COUNTRIES BORDERING ON THE CARIBBEAN SEA. THERE WERE MANY OTHER SUCH PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD -- IN EUROPEAN WATERS, IN THE FAR EAST, SOUTH ASIA, AND ELSEWHERE. STILL, I SAID, THESE KINDS OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES AND CONTROVERSIES DID NOT RESULT IN "PROVOCATIONS" THAT LED INEVITABLY TO WAR. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENTS WAS TO FIND WAYS TO DEAL WITH THEM IN A CIVILIZED AND PEACEFUL WAY. WHY, FOR EXAMPLE, DID THE GREEK GOVERNMENT REGARD THE

SAILING OF A TURKISH SEISMIC RESEARCH VESSEL INTO
INTERNATIONAL WATERS IN THE AEGEAN A "PROVOCATION" THAT
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COULD TRIGGER WAR AND WEREN'T PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVES
TO DEAL WITH THE MATTER AVAILABLE TO GREECE?

7. CARAMANLIS BRISTLED (AS HE USUALLY DOES WHEN HE IS
CROSSED). HE SAID THAT IF A TURKISH RESEARCH VESSEL
CONDUCTED ITS RESEARCH OVER THE RECOGNIZED TURKISH
CONTINENTAL SHELF THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM. BUT,
AS I KNEW, THERE WERE SOME AREAS IN THE AEGEAN WHERE
THE SHELF WAS IN DISPUTE. FOR TURKEY TO DO RESEARCH IN
THAT DISPUTED AREA AGAIN WOULD BE A "PROVOCATION". NEXT
TIME -- IF THERE WERE A NEXT TIME -- HE WOULD HAVE TO
"PREVENT" IT. HE DECLINED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC BUT
IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD HAVE SUCH A VESSEL ARRESTED OR
SEIZED. AS FOR MORE PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVES, HE HAD
ALREADY TRIED THEM -- THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE
INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE -- AND THEY WOULD NOT HAVE
WORKED. HE HAD AGREED TO BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AS WELL, BUT
GREECE COULD NOT ACCEPT SUCH A TURKISH ACT WHILE NEGOTIA-
TIONS WERE GOING ON. IT WOULD BE RAW PRESSURE AND
BLACKMAIL AGAINST GREECE AND IT SIMPLY COULD NOT BE
ACCEPTED. I ASKED IF HE HAD ANY INFORMATION TO THE
EFFECT THAT A TURKISH RESEARCH VESSEL WOULD INDEED BE
SAILING INTO THE AEGEAN SOON AND HE SAID THAT HE DID
NOT BUT THERE HAD BEEN SOME HINTS FROM TURKISH OFFICIALS
TO THAT EFFECT AND HE WAS VERY WORRIED ABOUT IT.

8. MY SECOND QUESTION DEALT WITH SO-CALLED TURKISH
"EXPANSION". I SAID MY IMPRESSION WAS THAT TURKEY
DENIED CATEGORICALLY HAVING ANY SUCH AIMS. WHY DID
HE THINK OTHERWISE? CARAMANLIS SCOFFED. FOR MORE THAN
A YEAR, HE SAID, HIS PRINCIPAL MINISTERS AND ADVISERS
HAD BEEN UNANIMOUS IN TELLING HIM THAT TURKEY WAS
CLEARLY MOVING INTO AN EXPANSIONIST PHASE AT GREECE'S
EXPENSE. CARAMANLIS SAID THAT HE HAD DISAGREED UNTIL
SIX MONTHS AGO. HE HAD BELIEVED THAT MANY TURKISH
ACTIONS AND POLICY POSITIONS HAD DERIVED FROM INTERNAL
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POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN TURKEY AND IN TIME WOULD BE
CONTROLLED IN A REASONABLE WAY BY TURKISH LEADERS.
BUT, THOUGH THINGS MAY NOT HAVE STARTED OUT THAT WAY,
THERE WAS NOW A GROWING MOMENTUM IN TURKEY TO ENLARGE

ITS RIGHTS AND INFLUENCE, WHICH EVEN TURKISH LEADERS WERE NO LONGER ABLE TO CONTROL. ARAMANLIS SAID HE NO LONGER HAD ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE MATTER AND HE WAS EXTREMELY WORRIED. IN RESPONSE TO ASKING FOR EVIDENCE SUPPORTING HIS VIEW, CARAMANLIS SAID THE EVENTS IN CYPRUS WERE THERE FOR ALL TO SEE. TURKISH CLAIMS TO THE AEGEAN SHELF AND THE SAILING OF THE SISMİK I WERE ALSO PART OF THE PICTURE. TURKEY'S DESIRE TO ESTABLISH A MEDIAN DIVIDING LINE ON THE AIRSPACE OVER THE AEGEAN WAS ANOTHER EXAMPLE. TURKEY NO LONGER ACCEPTED THE ESTABLISHED ICAO FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION BOUNDARIES JUST OFF THE ANATOLIAN MAINLAND. YIELDING ON THE AIRSPACE QUESTION, CARAMANLIS SAID, WOULD MEAN THAT GREECE -- A NATION CONSISTING OF AN ARCHIPELAGO AND 3,000 ISLANDS -- WOULD HAVE TO NOTIFY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT EVERY TIME A GREEK COMMERCIAL FLIGHT WENT EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE WHERE THERE WERE 500 GREEK ISLANDS WITH OVER 300,000 GREEK INHABITANTS. MORE-OVER, THE GOT HAD ESTABLISHED AN "ARMY OF THE AEGEAN," THE FOURTH ARMY, WITH OVER 120 AMPHIBIOUS CRAFT SITUATED JUST OPPOSITE THE GREEK ISLANDS. WERE THESE AMPHIBIOUS CRAFT INTENDED TO BE USED AGAINST RUSSIA, HE ASKED? TURKEY WAS ALSO BEGINNING TO AGITATE THE ISSUE OF THE 120,000 TURKS LIVING IN GREEK WESTERN THRACE, WITH OMINOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THAT AREA. FINALLY, THERE WERE THE STATEMENTS BY THE MOST SENIOR TURKISH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL HIMSELF, WHO HAD DECLINED TO USE THE TERM "GREEK ISLANDS IN THE AEGEAN" BUT SPOKE OF "AEGEAN ISLANDS". CARAMANLIS SAID THAT TURKISH EXPANSIONISM MAY BE CONCEALED FROM THE US AND OTHERS BUT IT IS THERE FOR THE GREEKS TO SEE. THUS, THE DANGER.

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9. WE CONCLUDED OUR CONVERSATION WITH CARAMANLIS SAYING THAT POLITICS IS TO A LARGE EXTENT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND IN DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS TIMING CAN BE EVERYTHING. A GOOD CLIMATE NOW EXISTS FOR THE NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION TO ADDRESS AND HELP DEAL WITH THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA AND HE HOPED VERY MUCH THE OPPORTUNITY WOULD NOT BE LOST. HE ASKED AGAIN IF I EXPECTED TO SEE CLIFFORD IN WASHINGTON AND I SAID THAT I DID, AND HE REQUESTED THAT I STRESS TO CLIFFORD HIS (CARAMANLIS') ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. HE SAID THAT WASHINGTON COULD DEPEND UPON HIM TO DO HIS UTMOST TO TRY AND COOPERATE BECAUSE HE FELT THAT GREECE'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNITED STATES WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE GREECE HAD. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE HAD TO BE A NEW APPROACH FROM WASHINGTON BECAUSE

THE RECENT LINES OF POLICY SIMPLY HAD NOT WORKED AND CONTAINED THE POTENTIAL FOR A CALAMITOUS MILITARY CLASH BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY.

10. AS I WAS LEAVING I MENTIONED TO CARAMANLIS THAT THE QUESTION OF OUR BILATERAL BASE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY COME UP WHILE I WAS IN WASHINGTON AND ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING SPECIAL HE WANTED TO SAY ON THIS SUBJECT. HE SAID NO, THAT WASHINGTON SHOULD BE IN NO DOUBT THAT HE WAS TOTALLY COMMITTED TO GREECE'S SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US AND NATO AND THAT HE WAS DOING HIS BEST TO TRY AND SETTLE THESE PROBLEMS. HE SAID HE WOULD NEED TIME. HE WAS SOMEWHAT VAGUE AND UNFOCUSED IN HIS COMMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT AND, NOT WANTING TO DISTURB ANY PRIVATE UNDERSTANDING CLIFFORD HAD WITH HIM, I DECIDED TO LET THE MATTER DROP.
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